

just heard about which my Representative and her Republican colleagues support. A 15% tax cut at my income level would be peanuts compared to my possible medical bills.

At my age I do not worry about dying, but without Medicare I would worry about surviving. Many of my friends are in the same position.

We need Medicare for ourselves and our children.●

TRIBUTE TO SAID FREIHA

● Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the life of Mr. Said Freiha, a past chairman of the influential Arab publishing house, Dar Assayad, and the founder of Assayad, a weekly newsmagazine.

Born in Lebanon in 1912, Mr. Said Freiha rose from humble beginnings committed to the belief that a strong society full of freedom, pride and dignity could only be achieved through free enterprise and democracy. In 1970, Mr. Freiha established the Said Freiha Foundation for Welfare and Scientific Services. The foundation has been instrumental in providing financial, medical and professional aid to members of the Arab media and their families.

Under this leadership, Dar Assayad became one of the top three printing and publishing houses in the Arab world. When Mr. Freiha died in March 1978, he left behind a press empire now producing 12 publications.

Said Freiha's memory will remain as a beacon in the Arab world. Readers from across the Arab world will continue to benefit from the literary treasures he left behind.●

TREASURY, POSTAL SERVICE AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS

● Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to thank the chairman and ranking member for working together to report this bill. I will certainly support final passage.

One of the most important budget items in this bill to me and my Seattle area constituents is funding for the new Federal courthouse. This courthouse has been needed, and in the works, for almost a decade. As Congress has expanded the role of Federal courts in crime fighting and other areas, our judges have gotten more and more squeezed. There is no doubt a new courthouse is needed.

At this time, the General Services Administration, working with the city of Seattle, has tentatively selected the main library for the city as the site for the new courthouse. The library is in sore need of replacement or major restoration. The library is a cherished public asset. The people in and near Seattle check out books at a rate of 1 million per year. They bring their children to story hour, attend the diverse programs, and conduct tremendous amounts of personal and professional research.

The city of Seattle recognizes the need for expansion of the Federal

courthouse and is committed to working energetically in partnership with the GSA to make this a reality. Seattle has offered to relocate its library to expedite expansion of the courthouse. I am pleased the city and GSA intend to work together, as quickly as possible, to find a mutually agreeable resolution of the cost and timing questions.

Mr. President, I again thank the chairman and ranking member for doing their part to move this courthouse toward completion. The need for the courthouse and a smooth, cost-efficient transition to a new library cannot be overstated. I look forward to working with you further in the coming years of this project to ensure the Federal justice system is poised to meet the growing needs of the region, and that Seattle's central library is kept whole in the process.●

FOREIGN DIFFERENTIAL EXPORT TAX SCHEMES

● Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, last month when we were considering legislation to extend the Generalized System of Preferences [GSP], I raised an issue involving an unfair trade practice that has been of great concern to U.S. growers and processors of soybeans. I described a tax policy employed by certain countries, including some who are major beneficiaries of the GSP program, to give their processors and exporters of agricultural products an unfair competitive advantage in world markets. This policy is used particularly to benefit foreign soybean meal and oil processors and exporters.

This tax policy, known as a differential export tax scheme [DET], in effect operates as an indirect subsidy for exports of soybean meal and oil, permitting oilseed processors in those countries to underprice their competitors and obtain greater market shares for these products. As a consequence, the United States share of the world export market for soybean products has declined significantly, while the countries that engage in these trade-distorting practices, such as Brazil and Argentina, continue to experience tremendous export growth in these same products. Moreover, these tax schemes have had the effect of creating artificial downward pressure on world price levels for these products, which has severely reduced U.S. soybean industry revenues.

In my statement last month, I cited the tax structure utilized by the State of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil as a particularly egregious case in point. At that time, I noted the commitment of the Brazilian Federal Government to reforming that system. I am pleased to report that earlier this month, the Government of Brazil enacted reform legislation that eliminates these taxes on exports of raw materials and semi-manufactured goods. I want to publicly congratulate the Government of Brazil for this major accomplishment. I hope the example of leadership that Brazil

has set in taking this important step will encourage other countries that continue to utilize these tax schemes to take similar steps toward free and fair trade. I will continue to carefully monitor these developments and, as I noted in my previous statement, I am prepared to consider appropriate measures to encourage further progress in this regard.●

UNITED STATES-JAPAN INSURANCE AGREEMENT

● Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I would like to call to this Chamber's attention the continuing failure of the Government of Japan to honor the United States-Japan Insurance Agreement. My colleagues will recall that I offered a resolution on this issue on July 25 during our consideration of the foreign operations appropriations bill. That resolution was adopted unanimously by the Senate.

It was my hope at the time that the Government of Japan would soon begin to implement the obligations it undertook in the insurance agreement signed in 1994. Regrettably, not only has Japan not fulfilled its obligation to open its insurance market, as called for under the agreement, it is now poised to commit a grave violation of it. Such a violation would undermine Japanese credibility and could cost American companies millions of dollars of hard earned business. Rather than leading to a more open market, this agreement and Japan's new insurance business law, are being implemented by the Ministry of Finance in ways that could lead to substantially reduced American market share.

Our well-respected Ambassador to Japan, Walter Mondale, told the National Press Club earlier this month that it appears possible that the Ministry of Finance [MOF] "is going to permit these huge insurance companies to develop subsidiaries to go into the third sector and swamp the third sector with the army of insurance agents they have, without opening the primary sector. . . . And I think many of [the foreign insurance companies] would be driven out." For the benefit of those Members unfamiliar with the insurance market, the so-called "third sector" includes such niche products as personal accident and long-term disability insurance, and it is the only sector where foreign firms currently can compete.

Since Ambassador Mondale made that statement, the possibility of a violation has grown. Just last week USTR met again with the MOF to take stock of our respective positions. What this meant in fact was the Japanese Government withdrew—in response to domestic industry pressure—all the concessions offered at earlier negotiations in Vancouver.

Rather than making progress, the negotiations are back to where they had been in March and April. And I believe we are now at a brink. Ambassador